

# **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

**between the**

**Judicial Branch, the Department of Children and Families of the State of Connecticut**

**And Zero to Three, National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families for the**

**Zero to Three Project in the City of New Haven, CT.**

## **I. BACKGROUND**

This Memorandum of Understanding is in support of a Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) grant awarded to New Haven, Connecticut through the Zero to Three (ZTT), National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) as the state's child welfare agency, the Zero to Three, National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families as the lead agency dedicated to the health and well being of babies and toddlers, and the Judicial Branch, specifically the Superior Court for Juvenile Matters responsible for child protection, termination of parental rights, families with service needs and delinquency matters, jointly collaborated to create the Zero to Three Project in the City of New Haven, Connecticut. This MOU creates the Zero to Three Project Collaborative among the parties demonstrating Connecticut's commitment to the BJA grant and as such:

Establishes a formal commitment between the parties to work collaboratively on developing and improving the state and local infrastructure on behalf of infants, toddlers and their families who reside in the city of New Haven, CT that are: 1) involved in the child welfare system, 2) in need of services related to abused and neglected infants and toddlers, and 3) subject to the jurisdiction of the court system because they have had their children removed pursuant to a court order granting custody or custody and guardianship to the state child welfare agency, DCF.

## **II. STATEMENT OF SHARED GOALS:**

The Zero to Three Project Collaborative agrees to the following shared goals:

- Increase awareness among all those who work with maltreated infants and toddlers about the negative impact of abuse and neglect on very young children; and
- Change local systems to improve outcomes and prevent future court involvement in the lives of very young children.

### **III. CORE COMPONENTS OF THE COLLABORATIVE**

#### **The Zero to Three Project Collaborative will:**

1. Implement an integrated system of care for infants, toddlers and families that addresses multi-system policies, procedures and practices resulting in improved access to services and collateral supports;
2. Increase the systems' capacity to better serve infants, toddlers and their families impacted by maltreatment through improved communication and information exchange among system practitioners and families;
3. Develop a system of joint, multidisciplinary training that promotes cross-agency understanding of evidence-based interventions, infant and toddler's mental health, development and well-being;
4. Establish mechanisms that promote more timely access to information across systems resulting in improved individual, program and system outcomes; and
5. Facilitate ongoing communication and collaborative problem resolution for concerns and issues raised by the parties.

### **IV. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COLLABORATIVE**

#### **A. Lead Agency Designation and Committees**

The parties agree to participate and be mutually responsible for the implementation of the provisions of this Agreement.

##### **1. Lead Agency**

For the purposes of the BJA grant, ZTT shall serve as lead agency. In this capacity, ZTT shall be responsible for coordinating the Court and local case specific team meetings, in addition to coordinating all information and reporting requirements of the project with BJA. All parties agree to provide ZTT with appropriate materials and a timely response to meet deadlines for meetings and other requirements and ZTT agrees to meet its obligations and deadlines in a timely manner.

##### **2. Court Team**

The ZTT Court Team is the main body of the ZTT Project Collaborative. It is comprised of state and local system representatives, and includes providers, families, community agencies, and advocacy groups.

Representatives from DCF, ZTT and the Judicial Branch shall comprise the Court Team and act in an executive capacity for the ZTT Project.

3. Case Specific Team (AKA ZTT Team)

The Case Specific Team(ZTT Team) is composed of the ZTT Community Coordinator, who serves as the convener and facilitator of the team meetings, the DCF case worker, parent(s) who have agreed to participate in the program and who have executed an "Agreement to Participate with the Zero to Three Team Project", the parent(s) attorney(s), child's attorney and GAL, if appointed and any community service providers who are providing services to the child or the parent(s), provided that appropriate releases of information are obtained from all necessary participants. The ZTT Team is convened to share updates on child/parent progress with recommended services.

4. Work Groups

Work groups are composed of Court Team members and other individuals as required for the development and implementation of specific products as indicated in Connecticut's work plan or as may otherwise be identified. Each work group will be co-chaired by a member of the Court Team and a member selected by the work group.

**V. IT IS MUTALLY AGREED AND UNDERSTOOD BY AND BETWEEN THE COOPERATORS THAT:**

1. This Memorandum in no way restricts participants from involvement in similar activities with other public and private agencies, organizations, and individuals.
2. Nothing in the Memorandum shall be construed to obligate agencies or the Judicial Branch to expend funds or to provide resources or be involved in any obligation for future payment of money or provision of resources.
3. Amendments to this Memorandum shall be made by formal consent of all parties, by the issuance of a written amendment, signed and dated by the parties, prior to any changes becoming effective.
4. Any party (or parties), in writing, may withdraw from this Memorandum in whole, or in part, at any time.
5. This instrument is neither a fiscal nor a funds-obligation document. Any endeavor involving reimbursement or contribution of funds between the parties to this instrument will be handled in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and procedures including those for federal procurement, assistance, and printing. Such endeavors will be outlined in separate agreements that shall be made in writing by representatives of the parties and shall be independently authorized by appropriate statutory authority.
6. This Memorandum will terminate upon the withdrawal or cessation of federal funding for the project.

**VI. EFFECTIVE DATE**


IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have entered into this Memorandum of Understanding as evidenced by their signatures below. The Memorandum of Understanding is effective upon the date of the final signature.

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

  
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Susan I. Hamilton, Esq., Commissioner

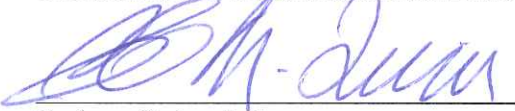
9/17/10  
Date

ZERO TO THREE NATIONAL CENTER FOR INFANTS, TODDLERS AND FAMILIES

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew Melmed, Executive Director ZTT

9/20/10  
Date

CONNECTICUT JUDICIAL BRANCH

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Barbara Quinn, Judge  
Chief Court Administrator

10/13/2010  
Date

CONNECTICUT JUDICIAL BRANCH,  
LEGAL SERVICES, APPROVED AS TO FORM

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Martin R. Libbin  
Deputy Director, Legal Services

10/20/10  
Date